



From the Portland VA Medical Center

News & Information

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NATIONAL SURVEYORS MAKE IT OFFICIAL: PORTLAND VA NURSES ARE AMONG THE NATION'S VERY BEST

Portland, Ore. — The Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center (PVAMC) has joined an elite group of only 3 percent of the nation's hospitals by being named a nursing Magnet facility. Magnet designation recognizes facilities that provide the very best nursing care and encourage an environment where nurses do quality work. PVAMC is just the third Oregon hospital to receive this prestigious recognition, along with Providence Portland and Providence St. Vincent Medical Centers, as well as the third VA medical center, joining facilities in Tampa and Houston.

"Today is an especially proud one for our medical center," says Medical Center Director James Tuchschiidt, MD, MM. "This formal recognition only validates what I have known for a long time: our nurses are world class, supported by an environment of world-class colleagues."

The Magnet Recognition Program for Excellence in Nursing Services comes from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), the nation's largest and most respected nursing accrediting and credentialing organization. As the professional nursing Gold Standard, the Magnet program grew up around the study of what attracts nurses to a given institution, what contributes to their decision to stay or leave, and the associated quality of patient care.

Sherri Atherton, MS, RN, CNS, CIC, and Nadine Johnson, MSN, RN, CPHQ, led the PVAMC Magnet team, which included nurses representing every unit in the medical center. They meticulously compiled documentation for the application process—documentation that ultimately stood 15.5 inches tall and weighed 40 pounds as a stack of hard copy. In June, 2005, the application was submitted, with more information requested and submitted in November.

ANCC reviewers spent many hours thoroughly reviewing this extensive documentation for PVAMC's management philosophy and practice in nursing services; its adherence to standards for improving the quality of patient care; its nursing leadership; and its policies honoring the cultural and ethnic diversity of patients, their families and care providers. In January, 2006, the medical center learned that its application had scored in the "range of excellence" and would advance to the site-visit stage. Two nurse surveyors visited PVAMC in March to verify the documentation and to meet with a variety of people at the medical center, including patients and their families, representatives from affiliated health care and teaching institutions, and others outside PVAMC, to learn more about the facility and quality of care.

"Our Magnet journey has involved many staff and much effort and strong dedication to a multi-year process," says Kathleen Chapman, MSN, RN, FACHE, PVAMC Deputy Director/Associate Director for Patient Care Services. "Leaders emerged from all corners, all the while continuing to provide excellent patient care against the backdrop of unprecedented growth in the numbers of veterans we serve. I am humbled by the caliber of staff with whom I am privileged to work."